



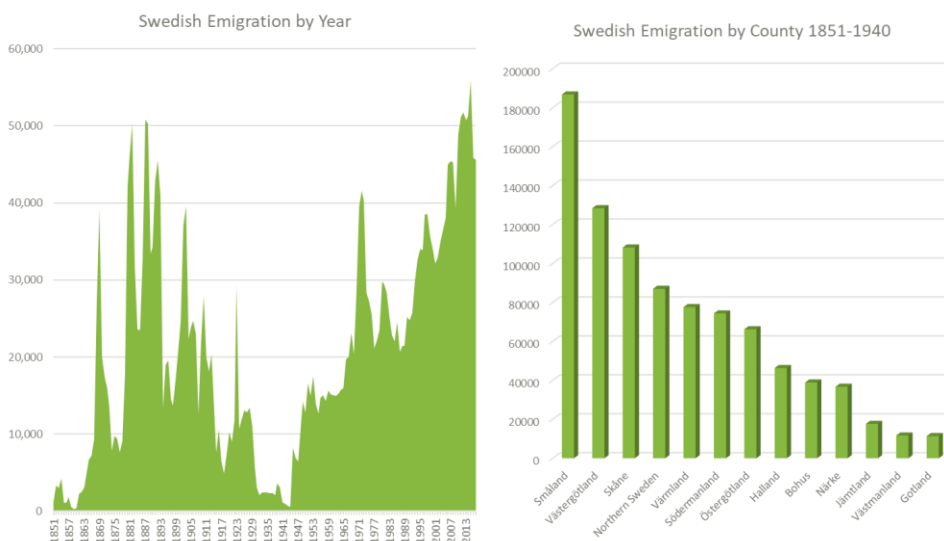
# Leaving the Garden of Sweden

Tanner Tolman, AG®  
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## History

Up until the late 1840s emigration from Sweden was negligible. The first major wave of Sweden emigrants occurred 1867-1869 and was due to a great famine that hit those years. Emigration peaked during the 1880s-1890s and this was a common trend throughout Europe. Emigration was low during both world wars. Småland had the highest concentration of emigrants because of its poor rocky soil. Göteborg became the port that most Swedes used because of its prime location on the Northern Sea. The rail connecting Stockholm and Göteborg was completed by 1862 and this allowed emigrants living farther east in the country to still use this port. Emigrating Swedes typically left from the town of Göteborg, sailed to Hull, England, crossed over to Liverpool by train, and then sailed to New York. However, they could have instead gone through Malmö, Copenhagen, Närke, Stockholm, or Hamburg.

Many of the Swedish emigrants ended up in Minnesota and today that state has a higher concentration of Swedish blood than any other state. Minnesota happened to be available for homesteading when the Swedes started coming. It has good soil and they often sang its praises to those still in Sweden.



## Use US Records First

Before diving into Swedish records, you will first want to find as much information as you can about your family in the United States. Things that will help you have success in Sweden include your ancestor's exact birthdate, birth parish, year of immigration, and whether they came alone or with family. It is usually not necessary to find the answer to all of these questions, but the more of these you can answer the easier it will be. To find the desired information, the best sources to check are usually Swedish/Norwegian Lutheran church records, headstones, obituaries, US censuses, death certificates, and naturalizations if your ancestor naturalized after 1916.

Swedish/Norwegian Lutheran church records are a great source because they often state exactly where in Sweden a person was born. Augustana College has a massive collection of them, but of these are unpublished and can only be viewed onsite or by hiring someone onsite to check them for you. It is estimated that 25% of all Swedish-American immigrants are in their database. To learn more click here. <https://www.augustana.edu/swenson/genealogy>.

Ancestry also has a 3,600,000 Swedish American church records.  
<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/61584/>

Death Certificates are often unpublished but they often give a person's date and place of birth and the names of their parents. Accessing them usually requires ordering them from the county vital records archive of wherever the person died. If your ancestor lived in Minnesota you can search for an indexed version of their death certificate by clicking here <https://www.mnhs.org/search/people>. You will still need to order the original record to get more information. Minnesota counties were generally recording deaths by 1870 and the state by 1910.

Obituaries can describe a person's life in great detail. You will most likely find them on websites that publish historical newspaper articles. The biggest names for genealogical newspaper research are newspapers.com, newspaperarchive.com, and genealogybank.com. Newspapers.com is the biggest of these but each has records unique to its website. All of them are subscription sites. For Swedish research you also want to check the Swedish American newspaper collection offered by the Minnesota Historical Society. This free database contains over 300,000 Swedish newspaper pages for all over America, not just Minnesota, from 1857-2007. To access this database, click here. <https://www.mnhs.org/newspapers/swedishamerican>. A Swedish obituary is more likely to give you information about the person's hometown in Sweden than an English one.

## Swedish Records

Emiweb.se offers many databases to help you find your ancestor in Sweden. The database I use the most is the Emigrants in Swedish Church Records. This database was compiled by examining the household examination rolls and recording anyone who emigrated out of the country. It is estimated that 75% of all Swedish emigrants are in this database. This database is especially useful for those who emigrated before 1869 that are probably not in the emigration port records.

The passenger lists for Swedish harbors database is also good. Ancestry also has those two same databases as well as records from Göteborg port. To access those click here <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/catalog/?keyword=swedish%20emigration>.

ArkivDigital is a subscription website that is excellent for Swedish research. I highly recommend purchasing a subscription if you plan on doing a large amount of Swedish research. One of ArkivDigital's greatest features is that they have indexed all of the household exams (local censuses) from 1800-1947. These records usually record each person's exact date of birth. If you know their name and exact birthdate you can try searching for them in this database. Then if you find a match see if there is a note that the emigrate to America.  
<https://www.arkivdigital.net/>

## Names

Swedes usually Americanized their names when they emigrated. This means that if your person is Andrew in American records, their name is probably actually Anders in Swedish. For a list of Swedish names and their English equivalents click here [http://www.chester.pa-roots.com/queries/swedish\\_names\\_and\\_their\\_english\\_.htm](http://www.chester.pa-roots.com/queries/swedish_names_and_their_english_.htm).

Additionally many Swedish emigrants changed their last names to whatever their father's last name was. If in Sweden they were Johan Johannesson but their father was Johannes Pärsson they may change their name to John Peterson. In other words just because their name is John Peterson in America does not guarantee their father was a man named Peter or Pär. It could actually be that their grandfather had that name.

## DNA

Sometimes despite everything you try, the paper trail in America is not good enough or their name is too common to uniquely identify them in Sweden. If that is the case you may want to try using DNA. If you go this route, you want to test the oldest living generation you can. Testing a 90 year old great uncle who is two generations closer to the immigrant ancestor will help you much more than testing your own DNA for example. The best database for Swedish research is MyHeritage. You will find a much better list of Swedish relatives there than you will with the other companies like Ancestry or 23andme.

## Case Studies

In class we will do two case studies. The first is on Amanda Hall Wessman KWNR-VXT and the second is on John Nelson G67P-SG5. I have provided their Family Tree ID numbers for you so you can look at them later and review the methodology used.

## Further Study

If you would like to practice what we have gone over in this webinar, here are the ID numbers of a few other Swedish emigrants. All of them have already been solved but look over the documentation and try to understand how the case was solved. See what you would do if you were the first person to ever research this person: Anders Pehrsson 9W3W-ZBW, Ingri Hansson KWJF-RWW, Axel Olson GSKZ-GY3, Fredrick Vilhelm Bergström 2Q1X-GM8, Herman Adamsson Engstrom LVS6-V6G.